

837.06/9-1454

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA 267  
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. Spetember 14, 1954  
REF : Embassy's Despatches 217 of Sept. 1; 243 of Sept. 8; 86 of July 21, 1954.

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	REC'D	OTHER
	ARR-3 9/16	REF-2 OCB/R-2 P-1 OLI-6 G-1 CIA-7 LAB-5 USIA-5 OCB-1

SUBJECT: Talk with Eusebio Mujal, Secretary-General of the CTC; CTC Desire to Carry on Organizational Campaign in Chile; Notes on CTC Affairs.

Eusebio Mujal, Secretary-General of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC), recently asked for an interview with this Embassy's labor reporting officer, which, after two postponements at Mujal's request, was finally held at his home. Mujal did not indicate that he wanted the interview for any particular reason, and as the enclosed memorandum of conversation shows a number of subjects were touched on by Mujal, who spoke ramblingly, almost exclusively, and rather freely.

In the Embassy's opinion, however, the principal reason why Mujal requested the interview was to try to enlist the Embassy's and in turn our Government's support in an effort to persuade the AFL, CIO and UMW to contribute to an ORIT fund intended to make it possible to send one or more CTC organizers to Chile to carry on with the campaign the CTC has in the past conducted there with the purpose of strengthening the anti Communist forces within the Chilean CGT. As the CTC has explained the situation to the Embassy in the past, what is most needed in Chile is to stiffen the purpose of the anti-Communist labor forces.

The Embassy's conclusion regarding Mujal's aim in requesting this interview appears corroborated by the fact that a few days later Francisco AGUIRRE, who takes a prominent part in the CTC's international activities, Ignacio GONZALEZ Tellechea, CTC International Secretary and Dr. Orlando GOMEZ Gil, office chief of the CTC International Secretariat, at lunch with the labor reporting officer, spent the greater part of three hours talking of the urgency of organizational work among the Latin American labor movements and particularly of the opportunity that now existed in Chile, and which might not exist for long, to take that movement definitely out of the orbit of Communist influence.

The Departments of State and Labor in Washington and Embassy Santiago are of course in a better position than this Embassy to pass judgment on the merit of Mujal's arguments. However, to this Embassy they sound convincing, and if it is true, as Embassy

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officers have informally been given to understand, that the CTC organizational work in Chile was highly successful in putting anti-Communist backbone into the Chilean movement, interested United States Government agencies might well wish to consider the advisability of trying to persuade the American movement to support the CTC in this campaign.

The Embassy has already indicated to the Department in Despatch 217 of September 1, 1954 that the American trade union representatives at the ORIT Secretariat meeting held in Habana at the end of August were, ~~the~~ with the exception of the CIO representation, opposed to the fund for the Chilean campaign.

In Weeka No. 36 (Despatch 243 of September 8, 1954) the Embassy reported to the Department that at the moment the CTC is apparently having financial difficulties. It could not meet its payroll for August on the 28th of that month, and when, more than a week later, it issued pay checks, they were dated September 15. Even before the 28th, a CTC source had indicated to the Embassy that because of the CTC's financial situation there might be difficulty in carrying out the ORIT secretariat resolution calling for the dispatch of a CTC organizer to Honduras to help the labor movement of that country.

Further, the Embassy is confidentially informed that the CTC has been able to deposit only \$66,000 of the \$86,000 that it pledged to the ICFTU for the establishment of the Plantations and Sugar Offices. It has written to OLDENBROEK, ICFTU Secretary-General, suggesting that since the first year of operations will not be a complete one, the plantations and sugar offices program go ahead.

Asked why the CTC was in these financial straits, the source replied that the Government simply was not subsidising the CTC in the accustomed manner. He had no satisfactory explanation for the fact that the CTC should be hard up when the collection of the \$2.00 voluntary quota was going so well and so short a time after the compulsory sugar quota check off, saying only that money was badly and loosely spent by the CTC.

From the emphasis Mujal, AGUIRRE and Gonzalez Tellechea put on the Chilean program, it appears that they would overcome many difficulties in order to produce the \$5,000 it calls for from the CTC.

The Embassy should add that there are apparently some rumors of an insubstantial nature circulating in labor circles to the effect that Mujal is regarded rather poorly by the BATISTA government, that his position is consequently most insecure, and that after the new presidential term and the national congress of the CTC due next spring, he is very likely


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to be replaced by José PEREZ Gonzalez as Secretary-General of the CTC. These rumors are rather natural in the Cuban setting and the circumstances of the day. The Embassy will try to check further on them and evaluate them in its next quarterly labor report or sooner, if developments justify it. For the present it may comment that practically no electoral propaganda on behalf of Perez Gonzalez, who is a government candidate for representative, has appeared and that this would appear to corroborate reports that Perez Gonzalez and the Workers' Bloc of Progresista Party is in fact receiving scant financial support from the government.

Mujal's statements on anti-Americanism in Latin America and the relative importance of economic assistance in fighting Communism reported in the attached memorandum suggest that the inferences regarding his views on this and related matters to be drawn from despatch 86 of July 21, 1954 should be substantially modified. He was there reported as having found the CIO statement on the Guatemalan situation more to his liking than the AFL statement and by implication as sharing in some degree the usual left-wing Latin American view on these subjects. Mujal seemed to be talking with sincerity when he touched on them in the conversation of the memorandum, and even if this were to be doubted, the fact would remain that his views as expressed in that conversation square completely with the attitude he has adopted on such crucial issues as Guatemala and the Honduran strike. It is probable, in the Embassy's opinion, that what more left-wing views on inter-American matters are expressed by the CTC—and these are not very radical or bitterly held—come from within the international secretariat or from individuals.

For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:

  
Juan de Zengotita  
Second Secretary

Enclosure: 

✓ 1. Memorandum.

cc: Amembassies: Santiago; Buenos Aires.

PLEASE SEE ADDITIONAL PAGE 4 FOR COMMENTS OF CHARGE D'AFFAIRES ON THIS DESPATCH.

COMMENTS BY THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES

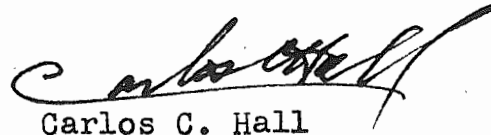
I consider this a timely, able and most useful report. From my personal experience I can add the following points, which may throw additional light on the subject of the despatch:

1. Mujal has criticized to me the AFL and CIO for following what he termed a philosophical and theoretical rather than a practical and effective line in this important field of combatting Communism in the Latin American labor movements.

2. In numerous interviews with Ambassador Gardner and myself Mujal has complained bitterly about the loss of the \$500,000 or \$600,00 subsidy that the CTC used to receive from the government. Hence, his somewhat nostalgic references to previous administrations.

3. When asked why the CTC was not more active in combatting Communism, Mujal always replied that the job required a great body of anti-Communist agitators which the CTC could no longer finance because of the loss of the government subsidy.

4. In an interview of August 26 President Batista expressed to me his low opinion of Mujal, making it seem probable that if he should succeed in his presidential campaign he would take measures to replace Mujal.



Carlos C. Hall



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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Participants: Eusebio MUJAL, Secretary General of  
Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC)

Juan DE ZENGOTITA, Second Secretary

On September 3 at the request of CTC Secretary General Eusebio Mujal, I had an interview with him at his home. We began by speaking of the meeting of the ORIT Secretariat which had been held at Habana the week before. Mujal considered it a successful meeting, but as he digressed from the meeting to the subject of Communism in the Americas and the need of organizational work by ORIT in various countries, it became clear that he was disappointed by the failure of the ORIT meeting to reach agreement on a special contribution for the carrying on of organizational work in Chile.

Mujal had wanted \$18,000 allotted for this work. (At first the figure had been \$26,000 but was cut down through discussion.) The CTC was willing to contribute \$5,000 and wanted the three American organizations and perhaps the Canadians to make up the other \$13,000.

Mujal stressed the importance of organizational work. Economic assistance was helpful and required, and in fact essential. But more important, and most important of all, was down-to-earth organization of the labor movement of the less advanced countries by the labor movements of the more advanced countries. The big foe in Mujal's mind was Communism; and Communism would be able to flourish, he asserted, regardless of economic assistance. It could be beaten by good organization of the workers in democratic trade unions.

It was clear that in Mujal's mind the CTC was just the instrument for organizational work of this kind in Latin America. He in no way reflected critically on the American unions or their representatives and we did not even mention the subject directly, but it came out that he thought the CTC had done a fine job in Chile earlier, that naturally, speaking Spanish, the CTC "activists" had an entrée in Latin America that non-Spanish speaking trade unionists would not have, and that CTC organizers could not be impugned as agents of imperialism in the same way as American organizers might. Moreover, Cuban activists would do the work more cheaply than American activists; both their salaries and expenses would run lower.

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Mujal was particularly anxious to start on this organizational work prior to the national congress of the Chilean workers, which, I gathered, is to be held in January or February. He wanted to guarantee that the congress would turn out 100% anti-Communist. He had written George Meany about the need for this job to be done; Meany had answered inviting him to come over to Miami in February to the meeting of the AFL's executive. They could talk the matter over then. But, Mujal commented: by that time the Chilean congress would have been held and over with. It came out later that Mujal has an invitation to attend the Chilean congress.

Mujal seemed to feel that there was particular need for organizational work in Bolivia, Colombia, Honduras, and Uruguay. He thought the danger from Communism was also great in the British West Indies. Here there was the problem of getting English-speaking Negro organizers: Americans would be suspect because of anti-imperialist propaganda; Cuban English-speaking Negro organizers were scarce if they existed at all.

Regarding the subjects of economic assistance, putative imperialism, anti-Americanism, etc., Mujal made it clear that he was far from sharing the usual views of the Latin American Left regarding United States responsibility for the existence of dictatorships in the Hemisphere. He spoke of arguing the point with Romulo Betancourt and Peruvian Apristas and asking them if what they wanted was the United States Navy to come down and restore their governments. He could not see what else they were advocating.

On the subject of Communism I made some remarks intended in an indirect manner to put him on the defensive regarding the carrying out of the CTC's anti-Communist resolution. He readily assumed the defensive. One trouble, he said, was that such a campaign might weaken the labor movement. If his local officials were changed over all of a sudden, the employers would jump in to break up the unions. To my direct question on this subject he answered that there had been no instance of employers taking advantage of the dismissal of Communist union officials to attack a union. However, in other circumstances in which local officials had had to be dismissed there had been such attacks on unions. In reply to another question, he said there were not many Communist local officials, anyway.

On politics Mujal reaffirmed his independent line, asserting that to take sides was not compatible with his position as Secretary General of the CTC. However, he thought, personally and confidentially, that it was better for the good of the country that Batista should win. He had given evidence of having a program and of watching out for the interests of all groups justly. There would be a better prospect for order and

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progress and efficient government with Batista as President. He thought Batista a more direct, honest and understanding man than Grau (who was nevertheless very intelligent but devious) or Prío. However, he would not even go so far as to declare his own personal views or political inclinations before the elections. He had been under pressure to run for senator for the Government and Grau had called on him several times to ask for his support. He controlled ~~sixty or seventy~~ thousand votes in Oriente, enough to swing elections either way. However, though he favored Batista, the fact was that he and many other labor leaders had come up with the Auténticos in power and the movement had prospered through them. The younger, conscious labor leaders had known only Auténtico governments during their careers. Probably 75% of the officials of the various unions and their locals were for Grau.

I sounded him out on Perón and ATLAS. He thought Perón and Peronism were on the down grade. Their policies had failed. He then revealed that Perón had invited him to visit Argentina; Mujal had replied that if he went to the Chilean congress, he would extend the trip to include Argentina.

I asked Mujal whether it was his personal ambition to make the Cuban labor movement independent of the Government and its support. His reply was free of cynicism but indicated clearly that in his opinion such an aspiration, however worthy, was impracticable for many years. He was taking steps toward the independence of the labor movement, he said, and such steps were the creation of the voluntary \$2 quota and the establishment of the compulsory check-off in the sugar and construction industries, but he had no illusions that in the circumstances of the country he was going to achieve independence for the labor movement.

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